

NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

April 2007

What is Earth Day?

Earth Day, April 22, is the annual celebration of the environment and a time to assess the work still needed to protect the natural gifts of our planet. Earth Day has no central organizing force behind it though several nongovernmental organizations work to keep track of the thousands of local events in schools and parks that mark the day. Earth Day is observed around the world, although nowhere is it a national holiday. In the United States, it affirms that environmental awareness is part of the country's consciousness and that the idea of protecting the environment - once the province of a few conservationists - has moved from the extreme to the mainstream of American thought.

(<http://www.usinfo.state.gov>)

Selected U.S. Environmental Highlights

In the 2000s

2003

President George W. Bush signs the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, helping to prevent forest fires and safeguard and preserve the nation's forests.

2003

More than 4,000 school buses will be retrofitted through the Clean School Bus USA program, removing 200,000 pounds of particulate matter from the air over the next 10 years.



2003

Clear Skies legislation and alternative regulations are proposed to create a cap and trade system to reduce SO₂ emissions by 70 percent and NO_x emissions by 65 percent below current levels.

2004

New, more protective, 8-hour ozone and fine particulate standards go into effect across the country.

2004

EPA requires cleaner fuels and engines for off-road diesel machinery such as farm or construction equipment.

2005

EPA issues the Clean Air Interstate Rule and the Clean Air Mercury Rule.

2006

U.S. Energy and agriculture officials announced \$34.5 million is available to fund new research in biofuels, solar energy and biomass genomics research to accelerate development of alternative fuels.

*(<http://www.epa.gov>
and <http://www.usinfo.state.gov>)*

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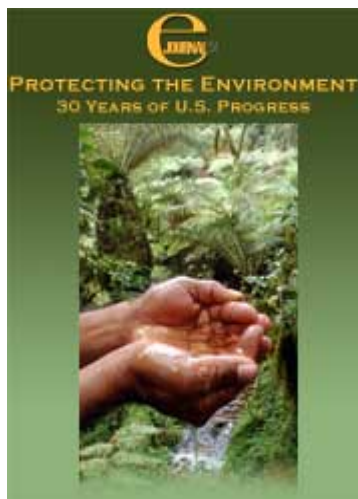


The electronic publication "Rachel Carson: Pen Against Poison" tells the story of Carson's life and the difference her book *Silent Spring* made to the world.
Available online at <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/carson/>

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eJournal USA (June 2005)

Protecting the Environment: 30 Years of U.S. Progress

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/>

The United States has made remarkable progress over the past 30 years in reducing pollution and protecting the environment within its borders. Statistics help tell the story. During this time, the U.S. economy grew by 187 percent, population grew by 39 percent, and energy consumption increased by 47 percent, yet air pollution decreased by 48 percent. In 2002, 94 percent of Americans were served by community water systems that met all health-based standards, up from 79 percent of the population in 1993.

If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow.

Rachel Carson (1907-1964)

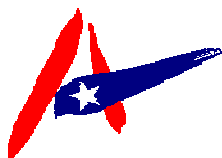
Whatever befalls the earth, befalls all the sons of the earth.

Chief Seattle (c. 1786–1866)

This we know: The earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood which unites us all.

Chief Seattle (c. 1786–1866)

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Address: PL 15 (Unioninkatu 36), 00014 Helsingin yliopisto

Tel. (09) 191 24048 Fax: (09) 652 940 E-mail: arc@usembassy.fi

<http://www.usembassy.fi/arc.htm>